

REACTOR UNIT

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

[0001] The disclosure of Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-279431 filed on September 25, 2002, including the specification, drawings, and abstract is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The invention relates to a reactor unit whose reactor bodies can be cooled efficiently.

2. Description of the Related Art

[0003] Heretofore, there has been known a reactor unit whose smoothing reactors, which are used for an electric power converter, for example, a converter, an inverter or the like, can be cooled efficiently. For instance, such a reactor unit is disclosed in Paragraph 0007 and Figs. 1 and 2 of Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open No. 5-109542.

[0004] In the reactor unit disclosed in Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open No. 5-109542, reactor bodies, each of which is constructed by winding a pair of coils around an iron core, are accommodated in a metal box-type case exhibiting a high thermal conductivity, and a space formed in the case is filled with a resin insulant exhibiting a high thermal conductivity.

[0005] A curable resin such as epoxy resin or the like is used as the resin insulant that is high in thermal conductivity. Shrinkage or the like of the resin occurring during curing thereof causes problems. That is, the resin insulant in the metal box-type case is detached from an inner face thereof, and the metal

box-type case undergoes deformation such as distortion or the like.

[0006] Hence, in order to prevent such detachment or deformation, there has been known another technology. According to this technology, a basket body made of a metal and having one open face, reactor bodies accommodated in the basket body, a lid body made of a metal and closing an open end of the basket body, and a curable mold resin filling the interior of the basket body are provided. Eight spaces to be filled with the mold resin are formed between the reactor bodies and the lid body. These spaces are separated from one another by a pair of cruciform spacers and a plate-type spacer located between the cruciform spacers. The spaces thus defined serve to reduce shrinkage ratio of the mold resin. For instance, such a technology is disclosed in Paragraph 0007 and Figs. 1 and 2 of Japanese Utility Model Application Laid-Open No. 4-133486.

[0007] A reactor unit constructed as described above and disclosed in Japanese Utility Model Application Laid-Open No. 4-133486 serves only to reduce shrinkage ratio of the mold resin and cannot suppress shrinkage thereof sufficiently. In particular, the lid body is designed simply as a plate and thus cannot be prevented from being deformed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] In order to solve the problems stated above, the invention provides, as an exemplary embodiment thereof, a reactor unit which can be prevented from being deformed due to shrinkage of a mold resin occurring during curing thereof.

[0009] First of all, therefore, there is provided a reactor unit comprising a basket body, a plurality of

reactor bodies, a lid body, and a mold resin. The basket body has one open face and is made of a metal. The reactor bodies are accommodated in the basket body. The lid body is made of a metal and closes an open end of the basket body. Outlet holes are formed in the lid body. The mold resin is a curable resin. The basket body is filled with the mold resin, with a coil of each of the reactor bodies having been drawn out from a corresponding one of the outlet holes of the lid body. This reactor unit is characterized in that at least one partition, which is located between the reactor bodies and whose leading end extends from an inner face of at least one of the basket body and the lid body and abuts on an inner face of the other, is formed protrusively.

[0010] According to the reactor unit thus constructed, the basket body made of the metal has one open face, and the open end of the basket body is closed by the lid body made of the metal. The partition, whose leading end extends from the inner face of one of the basket body and the lid body and abuts on the inner face of the other, is formed protrusively. The reactor bodies are accommodated in the basket body such that the partition is located between the reactor bodies. The basket body is filled with the curable mold resin, with the coil of each of the reactor bodies having been drawn out from a corresponding one of the outlet holes formed in the lid body.

[0011] Thus, even if the mold resin filling the interior of the basket body has shrunk while curing, the lid body can be prevented from being deformed because the inner face of the lid body abuts on and is supported by the partition.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] The above-mentioned construction and other constructions, objects, features, advantages, technical and industrial significance of this invention will be better understood by reading the following detailed description of the exemplary embodiments of the invention, when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1A is a frontal longitudinal sectional view of a reactor unit in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 1B is a lateral longitudinal sectional view of the reactor unit in accordance with the first embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 2 is a frontal sectional view which illustrates how a basket body and a lid body of the reactor unit in accordance with the first embodiment of the invention are related to each other;

Fig. 3A is a frontal longitudinal sectional view of a reactor unit in accordance with a second embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 3B is a lateral longitudinal sectional view of the reactor unit in accordance with the second embodiment of the invention; and

Fig. 4 is a frontal sectional view which illustrates how a basket body and a lid body of the reactor unit in accordance with the second embodiment of the invention are related to each other.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS

[0013] In the following description and the accompanying drawings, the invention will be described

in more detail in terms of exemplary embodiments thereof.

[0014] (First Embodiment)

5 [0015] Figs. 1A and 1B illustrate a reactor unit in accordance with the first embodiment of the invention. Fig. 1A is a frontal longitudinal sectional view of the reactor unit. Fig. 1B is a lateral longitudinal sectional view of the reactor unit. Fig. 2 is a frontal sectional view illustrating how a basket body and a lid body of the reactor unit are related to each other.

10 [0016] Referring to Figs. 1A, 1B, and 2, a reactor unit 11 includes a basket body 12 made of a metal exhibiting a relatively high thermal conductivity, for example, of aluminum or the like, a plurality of reactor bodies 13 accommodated in the basket body 12, a plate-type lid body 14 made of a metal exhibiting a relatively high thermal conductivity, for example, of aluminum or the like, and a curable mold resin 15 with which the basket body 12 is filled.

20 [0017] The basket body 12 has one open face. An open end 12a of the basket body 12 is closed by the lid body 14. A brim-type flange 12b for fixing the lid body 14 is integrated with the basket body 12. Two partitions 12d formed as rising walls are integrated with the basket body 12 in such a manner as to protrude from an inner bottom face (inner face) thereof.

25 [0018] Leading ends of the partitions 12d are extended so far as to abut on a bottom face (inner face) 14a of the lid body 14 when the open end 12a is closed by the lid body 14. The partitions 12d cooperate with a wall face 12e to form three accommodation spaces 12f into which the interior of the basket body 12 is equally divided. The wall face 12e faces the partitions 12d of the basket body 12. In addition, a notch 12g is formed in each of the partitions 12d at a position

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close to the open end 12a. A wire 16 for a temperature detector (not shown) provided in the basket body 12 is located in the notch 12g. The temperature detector is provided to detect a temperature of each of the reactor bodies 13. A thermistor or the like is employed as the temperature detector.

[0019] Each of the reactor bodies 13 includes an iron core 17 and a pair of coils 18 wound around the iron core 17. Crimp contacts (not shown) are fitted to leading ends of the coils 18.

[0020] Outlet holes 14b are formed in the lid body 14. An end of each of the coils 18 passes through a corresponding one of the outlet holes 14b. The wire 16, which is extended from the aforementioned temperature detector and which is so disposed as to pass through the notch 12g of a corresponding one of the partitions 12d, is drawn out from one of the outlet holes 14b.

[0021] A curable resin exhibiting insulating properties, for example, epoxy resin or the like is employed as the mold resin 15. Each of the accommodation spaces 12f is filled with the mold resin 15 flowing from a corresponding one of the outlet holes 14b, such that the mold resin 15 surrounds each of the reactor bodies 13 accommodated in a corresponding one of the accommodation spaces 12f. In this case, a surplus of the mold resin 15, which results from differences among amounts of the mold resin 15 with which the accommodation spaces 12f are filled, is supplied to an adjacent one of the accommodation spaces 12f from a gap formed between the notch 12g and the wire 16. As a result, the mold resin 15 can be supplied to the accommodation spaces 12f homogeneously.

[0022] In the aforementioned construction, the reactor unit 11 has the reactor bodies 13 accommodated in the accommodation spaces 12f of the basket body 12

respectively. After the temperature detector has been accommodated in an arbitrary (preferably central) one of the accommodation spaces 12f, the end of each of the coils 18 of each of the reactor bodies 13 is drawn out from a corresponding one of the outlet holes 14b of the lid body 14. While being so disposed as to extend along the notch 12g, the wire 16 is drawn out from a corresponding one of the outlet holes 14b.

[0023] In this state, while the coils 18 and the wire 16 that have been drawn out from the outlet holes 14b are maintained in a suitably strained state, the open end 12a is closed by the lid body 14. Then, the mold resin 15 is fed from each of the outlet holes 14b (or an arbitrary one of the outlet holes 14b).

[0024] The mold resin 15 is thereafter cured. Because of a reduction in volume resulting from division of the interior of the basket body 12 into the accommodation spaces 12f and abutment of the leading ends of the partitions 12d on the bottom face 14a of the lid body 14, shrinkage of the mold resin 15 occurring during curing thereof does not lead to deformation of the lid body 14.

[0025] Further, since the partitions 12d are integrated with the basket body 12, the basket body 12 can also be prevented from being deformed.

[0026] (Second Embodiment)

[0027] Figs. 3A and 3B illustrate a reactor unit in accordance with the second embodiment of the invention. Fig. 3A is a frontal longitudinal sectional view of the reactor unit. Fig. 3B is a lateral longitudinal sectional view of the reactor unit. Fig. 4 is a frontal sectional view illustrating how a basket body and a lid body of the reactor unit are related to each other.

[0028] Referring to Figs. 3A, 3B, and 4, a reactor unit 21 includes a basket body 22 made of a metal

exhibiting a relatively high thermal conductivity, for example, of aluminum or the like, the reactor bodies 13 accommodated in the basket body 22, a plate-type lid body 24 made of a metal exhibiting a relatively high thermal conductivity, for example, of aluminum or the like, and the curable mold resin 15 with which the basket body 22 is filled.

[0029] The basket body 22 has one open face. An open end 22a of the basket body 22 is closed by the lid body 24. The basket body 22 has a brim-type flange 22b for fixing the lid body 24.

[0030] Partitions 24d are integrated with a bottom face (inner face) 24a of the lid body 24 in such a manner as to protrude therefrom. When the open end 22a is closed by the lid body 24, the partitions 24d abut on a bottom face (inner face) 22c of the basket body 22. Outlet holes 24b are formed in the lid body 24. An end of each of the coils 18 passes through a corresponding one of the outlet holes 24b.

[0031] The wire 16 for a temperature detector (not shown) provided in the basket body 22 is drawn out from one of the outlet holes 24b. The wire 16 is so disposed as to pass through a notch 24g formed in each of the partitions 24d at a position close to the bottom face 24a. The temperature detector is provided to detect a temperature of each of the reactor bodies 13. A thermistor or the like is employed as the temperature detector.

[0032] Each of the accommodation spaces 22f is filled with the mold resin 15 flowing from a corresponding one of the outlet holes 24b, such that the mold resin 15 surrounds each of the reactor bodies 13 accommodated in a corresponding one of the accommodation spaces 22f. In this case, a surplus of the mold resin 15, which results from differences among

amounts of the mold resin 15 with which the accommodation spaces 22f are filled, is supplied to an adjacent one of the accommodation spaces 22f from a gap formed between the notch 24g and the wire 16. As a result, the mold resin 15 can be supplied to the accommodation spaces 22f homogeneously.

[0033] In the aforementioned construction, the reactor unit 21 has the reactor bodies 13 accommodated at suitable locations of the basket body 22. After the temperature detector has been accommodated in an arbitrary (preferably central) one of the accommodation spaces 22f, the end of each of the coils 18 of each of the reactor bodies 13 is drawn out from a corresponding one of the outlet holes 24b of the lid body 24. While being so disposed as to extend along the notch 24g, the wire 16 is drawn out from a corresponding one of the outlet holes 24b.

[0034] In this state, while the coils 18 and the wire 16 that have been drawn out from the outlet holes 24b are maintained in a suitably strained state, the open end 22a is closed by the lid body 24. Then, the mold resin 15 is fed from each of the outlet holes 24b (or an arbitrary one of the outlet holes 24b).

[0035] The mold resin 15 is thereafter cured. Because of a reduction in volume resulting from division of the interior of the basket body 22 into the accommodation spaces 22f and abutment of the leading ends of the partitions 24d on the bottom face 22c of the basket body 22, shrinkage of the mold resin 15 occurring during curing thereof does not lead to deformation of the lid body 24.

[0036] In each of the aforementioned first and second embodiments, each of the reactor bodies 13 is spaced from a corresponding one of the partitions 12d or 24d (and the wall face 12e of the basket body 12 or

a wall face 22e of the basket body 22) by a gap.

However, each of the reactor bodies 13 may be disposed with this gap being eliminated. That is, the gap between each of the reactor bodies 13 and the wall face of a corresponding one of the partitions 12d or 24d (and the wall face 12e or 22e of the basket body 12 or 22) may be filled with the mold resin.

[0037] In such a case, therefore, according to an assembly procedure of the first embodiment for example, while the reactor bodies 13 are accommodated on the side of the basket body 12, the open end 12a is closed by the lid body 14.

[0038] In the second embodiment, it is possible to adopt an assembly procedure wherein the basket body 22 is so fitted to the lid body 24 as to cover it while the reactor bodies 13 are retained on the side of the lid body 24, as well as the aforementioned assembly procedure wherein the reactor bodies 13 are accommodated at suitable locations.

[0039] In each of the aforementioned embodiments, the partitions 12d or 24d are so formed as to extend across the entire interior of the basket body 12 or 22. However, the partitions 12d or 24d may be divided into a plurality of portions such that they look like teeth of a comb in a side view, with the notch 12g or 24g being dispensed with.

[0040] The reactor unit of the invention is constructed as described above and thus can be prevented from being deformed due to shrinkage of the mold resin occurring during curing thereof.

[0041] While the invention has been described with reference to preferred embodiments thereof, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the preferred embodiments or constructions. To the contrary, the invention is intended to cover various

modifications and equivalent arrangements. In addition,
while the various elements of the preferred embodiments
are shown in various combinations and configurations,
which are exemplary, other combinations and
5 configurations, including more, less or only a single
element, are also within the spirit and scope of the
invention.